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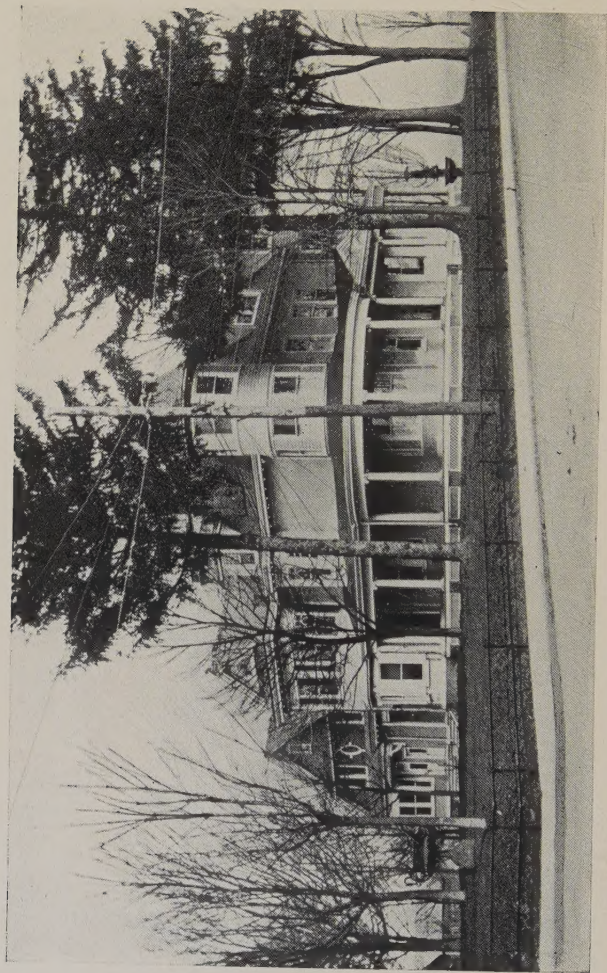
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RESIDENCE OF MR. T. S. COOPER

COOPERATION IN COOPERSBURG

BY
EDMUND DES. BRUNNER



NEW YORK

Missionary Education Movement of the
United States and Canada

1916

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INTRODUCTION

THE community dependent upon farming has recently become a force in education and in farm business. It is important that its outlines and natural boundaries be recognized. This survey of Coopersburg exhibits such a community in action. It was perhaps a surprise to the people of Coopersburg to confront their unity with one another and their separation from those outside their bounds. Yet the community lay latent all the time. It was even a common matter of remark in conversation. It was, however, left out of civic action. It was ignored by the churches.

The basis of the rural community is the fact that the American farmer is a stay-at-home. His cattle, his crops, his buildings, and his seasonal tasks require that he con-

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fine his wanderings to a limited habitat. He can go from home only so far as the horse-drawn vehicle can be relied on to bring him home again the same day. The automobile may lengthen this radius, but its influence will not be recorded, by larger communities in Eastern states, until two generations have passed. Marriages have been formed within this habitat, kinships have cemented the families and attached the businesses, until the rural community has become a social whole, more real than county or township or borough. These are made to work as civil divisions by the law, but the rural community is spiritual. It is made to work by the motives of the heart and the instincts that lie deepest in the nature of men and women.

The systematic investigation of rural communities has occupied much attention of late. Its purpose is to get an understanding of the two rural institutions which are

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under the control of public opinion and subject to deliberate public action. These are the church and the school. Each is professedly a creature of the public, and open to discussion. The school has a "district" and the church a "parish," each of these being an attempt to define the community, though these ideas have been dimmed and sometimes forgotten in recent educational and religious thinking. The presentation of the social realities on which both institutions are founded necessitates a recognition by church and school of their essentially social character.

The publication of these facts about the community is essential to the survey, because the community must act together. The church and school have been held back by policies essentially private. Denominational interest has seemed to justify the church in carrying on its affairs without consulting all the people for whom the church exists.

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The dominance of a few over school affairs has caused these few to forget that the school exists for all within the habitat of every farm household represented in the school. The publication of the survey makes it possible for all who read to see the community's affairs in the same light and to state its needs in the same terms.

The reorganization of the church and the school will go forward only as fast as men see the social facts upon which these two institutions are based. Both church and school are social. There would be need for neither if persons only were to be converted and if individuals only were to be educated. American churches and schools, however, are inherited from Europe, not created by American social consciousness. The American mind has only lately acknowledged the existence of social facts. The organization of public institutions upon these social facts will therefore be slow. Since leaders with

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eyes opened to these realities are not yet many, it is well that the rebuilding go on slowly. This book will contribute a light for the eyes of some who might otherwise see only persons and their concerns in the old and closely organized population of Pennsylvania.

The work done in preparing this survey by the author and the investigator is a fine example of the service which the ministers of Christian churches alone can render. In these days churchmen can investigate schools and all other institutions, but schoolmen cannot investigate churches. The minister and the church have access to all interests; but the officer employed by the state has not so wide a range. In the rural revival now beginning it is to be hoped that the Church and the ministers of the churches will take the place assigned to them. For, without religious leadership this movement, being essentially spiritual,

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cannot command the universal assent it requires. The leadership of the church is not a dictation of others, much less a rebuking of men in general, but it is an obedience and a service, in which the church is first to hear the word of the divine Spirit.

WARREN H. WILSON.

New York City

April 27, 1916.

PREFACE

BACK of every record of achievement there must lie the human forces that are responsible for it. Because this is true, a word is perhaps advisable to explain my right to tell this little story of what some far-visioned men and women wrought out in a country village.

Not until my graduation from the Theological Seminary did I know that the peaceful rural side through which I chanced to travel on train or trolley was struggling with problems as acute as those which pressed upon city communities.

Born and raised in a manufacturing community I had every interest centered in the city. What work I did in sociology dealt entirely with city conditions and the causes which produced them. I dreamed of the day when the plant of some institutional

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church would be mine to direct, when I could preach the fulness of the gospel to the restless city throngs in terms of social service as well as of individual salvation.

To this end I planned for one year of postgraduate study in such courses as would best assist me in attaining this ambition. Then came a call—a call to a village church. Both the congregation and the village were small—very small in comparison with the multitudes in the picture of my fancy. But I accepted, despairingly, firmly resolved to make this church a stepping-stone to larger fields of service. I went to work and dwelt among a farming folk, went not knowing that lima beans grew in pods as I confessed later! I went and in the going plunged into the rural problem. The religious, economic, social conditions of the average rural community of which such a village was the center came as an overwhelming revelation. In a few weeks I

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felt like a tired swimmer still many yards from shore—and then came help and “second wind.”

The village was Coopersburg, and there I served for less than four years, but years momentous in the community's history and filled with events that may prove of real service to similar communities. For in these years in Coopersburg some men and women learned to cooperate, to sink the individual for the sake of the common good, to apply the gospel of Christ to community conditions, to develop within themselves that leadership which is latent in so many rural communities, needing but the life-giving touch of the Christ through his Church to release it in service. Because I happened to be there through these years and to work with these men and women, and because I am still associated with them, although no longer in their midst, I have been asked to set down the story of these years.

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I do so gladly. I am still in the rural work. I have served my apprenticeship. To transform and fuse the many types that go to make up rural America into one great people for the Lord is the task of the Master's disciple ordained or unordained. It is a great task and a hard one, beset with difficulties, discouragements, even dangers, but the great day of triumph is coming when the sum total of many such experiences as are recorded here will be one of the assets of that more glorious rural America upon which God's sun will some day shine.

EDMUND DES. BRUNNER.

EASTON, PA.

March 17th, 1916.

I

HISTORIC COOPERSBURG

AT the southwestern corner of Lehigh County, Pennsylvania, lies the little town of Coopersburg. It counts but forty-five miles to Philadelphia and eight to either Bethlehem or Allentown, but it conservatively divides itself from the rest of the world by low lying mountains to the north and west. It is watered by numberless springs and tiny streams and is beautiful to look upon.

The original settlers of this county were Mennonites. George Bachman, the first, cleared his land in 1737 and he and his neighbors united in building a meeting-house in 1738-9—a typical “single cell” church, bare and small but useful. Another structure that has since become his-

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toric was built by him—the first hotel—the Barron House.

Coopersburg soon grew to be a place of some importance. It became a stopping-place on the stage route from Philadelphia to Moravian Bethlehem. Later the road from Allentown to Philadelphia effected a junction with the original highway at Coopersburg. It was no extraordinary thing to find from thirty to forty teams in the stable yard of the Barron House as night drew on.

The storm of the Revolutionary war seems to have passed around this quiet settlement and there is no record of anything that broke its calm before, during, or after the troublous years of which that struggle was the center. Certainly wounded soldiers on their way to the hospital at Bethlehem must have passed through, and also the many prominent men that visited the settlement there, but of these things Coopersburg took no note.



STREET VIEWS
Gabriel Hosiery Mills in the Middle

HISTORIC COOPERSBURG

With the opening of the nineteenth century the family from which the village was to take its name settled there and with them came the cattle raising industry. It has developed into the famous Cooper Jersey Cattle Farm whose annual sales are known the world over.

The village was made a post-office in 1818. A blacksmith and wheelwright shop became necessary and in 1820 a general store was added to the group of buildings that lined each side of the turnpike.

The growing importance of Bethlehem proved a help to the community, for in 1856-7 a railroad was built to connect this town with Philadelphia. Coopersburg by this time had several hundred inhabitants and was designated as a station. The road was built three quarters of a mile to the east of the turnpike which resulted in drawing the village out in the shape of a T. This road also brought the community into more

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intimate contact with the outside world. Its beauties attracted well-to-do Philadelphians and Coopersburg for thirty years was known as a summer resort. In 1890 the village, now for twelve years an incorporated borough, had a population of 454, increasing to 556 in 1900 and 683 in another ten years, by which time there was also a well organized national bank. In 1902 a trolley line was built connecting it with Allentown, Philadelphia, and intermediate points and thus opening still further opportunities for association with its neighbors. People in Coopersburg—especially children of retired farmers—now began to secure employment in the city. City interests began to overshadow the fundamental interest of agriculture. City amusements began to attract. Life became more complex. The time of testing that comes to every rural village arrived.

In 1912 electricity was introduced into

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the village and the borough installed street lights. This made a considerable difference in the community life. People stayed up



SHOWING LOCATION OF COOPERSBURG

later. Evening gatherings and meetings became more attractive, labor saving devices could be introduced into the homes and in many ways life could be brightened.

To-day the community seems an ideal

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rural town, with its mixture of old and new, its neat and shaded streets, its well kept homes, its beautiful farm surroundings, its attractive school and churches, its general air of peace and solid prosperity.

A commonplace record is this—more prosaic than that of many a country village. For more than a century and three quarters the people toiled hard and honestly and played little, enjoyed their rest, helped their neighbors, worshiped their God, loved, married, and died, untroubled by conditions that weighed upon the world outside. It was a simple, quiet life, but concealed within its routine, processes were being wrought out of vital interest and promise.

II

THE PEOPLE, THE CHURCH, AND THE LIFE

COOPERSBURG is in an unusual degree homogeneous, ninety-eight per cent. of the population being Pennsylvania-German. To understand the community and its achievements one must know something of this race that comprises its population.

For two hundred years the Pennsylvania-Germans have sown their seed and harvested their crops. For two hundred years significant processes have been working out among them. For two hundred years the rest of America has misunderstood them and laughed at them.

The Pennsylvania-German immigration to America was part of the same general movement that brought the Quakers. This

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race had been oppressed economically and religiously. They came to the new continent dominated by the desire to be left alone. They had no desire to mingle with the other races that were making up the new nation. William Penn was ready to welcome these oppressed folk from his mother's homeland. The first who arrived from the Palatinate settled near Germantown, Pennsylvania, in 1683. The second distinctive community arrived in the following year, and the curious company which first settled along the banks of the picturesque Wissahickon near Philadelphia and then later moved to Ephrata on the Cocalico, near Lancaster, came in 1694. As is well known, this was but the beginning of the immigration which brought into Pennsylvania the many sects it now has. Pressing into many localities but ever following the limestone soil that they had known in the land of their origin these people settled upon the land and from

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the first became an agricultural group. Religiously they adhered to many different beliefs. There were Mennonites and Schwenkfelders, Dunkards and Seventh Day Baptists, State Church Lutheran and Reformed, together with representatives of the oldest of the Protestant bodies—the Moravians.

In their strength and weakness together the Pennsylvania-Germans have shown that there is an "essential relation as far as American agriculture goes, between successful and permanent farming and religious life."¹ There are two types of Pennsylvania-Germans which have nothing in common except the bond of almost identical dialects and a similar view-point over against outsiders. In all other things they have grown apart to a greater or less degree. The one type is found largely in York and Lancaster counties, the other inhabits Berks, Lehigh, Northampton, and portions of

¹Wilson, W. H., *The Evolution of the Country Community*, 68.

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Bucks and Montgomery counties. The former type are the sectaries, the latter, more generally members of the old state Church bodies, are the credalists, so called for convenience because this term seems best to differentiate them from the many small and less known religious bodies, long commonly combined by observers under the term "sectaries." The term "credalist" is used because the uniting bond of the old state Church bodies was belief or creed, some historic statement or confession, whereas the uniting bond of the sectaries became the many customs and habits which have made them seem peculiar in the eyes of the world. In the sectary type are included the fourteen varieties of Mennonites, such as the Amish and Dunkards, and there are also the Seventh Day Adventists and the Schwenkfelders. The last-named, however, have their chief settlements in Montgomery County. These different

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sects have divided into conservative and progressive wings but they are all remarkable for their ability to rear stable communities in the midst of adverse conditions and in spite of outside opposition. They have done this through cooperation between their economic and religious habits. This is their strength and the strength of their rural churches.

Dr. Warren H. Wilson in his book, *The Evolution of the Country Community*, has given a very clear analysis of the conditions pertaining among the sectaries. Their beliefs are simple in the extreme. They have small use for theological hairsplitting but have turned their attention to the practical affairs of life down to the minutest details. Strict abstinence from worldly finery is enjoined upon women. The buggies and even the automobiles of one sect must be painted black. Hooks and eyes are used by the men to fasten their clothes.

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These things may seem ridiculous to us but they are a part of a religious system that also touches the weightier matters of the law. The Pennsylvania-German farmer of the sectaries shuns debt, not merely because he dislikes to owe any man anything, but rather because he regards debt as a sin and knows that the church will rigidly enforce the payment of all the obligations assumed. Furthermore the church carefully safeguards the marriage tie which is one of the reasons why among the sectaries the standard of conduct between the sexes has always been good even if not quite perfect.

Another feature worthy of mention is the economic cooperation of the sectary farmers which extends from the function of selling produce down to helping to rehabilitate the unfortunate and marginal man in the community. The sectary type of Pennsylvania-German has succeeded where others, even of his own race, have failed and he has suc-

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ceeded because he has consciously made every act an expression of his religion. His religion has entered into his whole life. To him all days can be used in serving his God; to him the land which yields him substance is holy land and God is a very real Giver of daily bread.

Representatives of both kinds of Pennsylvania-Germans will be found anywhere in the counties that these people have settled. The first type predominates in York and Lancaster counties. The second or credalist type is the controlling element in the population of the other German counties of the state. It predominates also in Coopersburg. Religiously this type belongs more largely to the better known denominations. It has had the advantage of freer contact with other types and ideas and yet in some respects it is weaker than the sectary type. Among the farmers there is woful lack of cooperation. They look upon their nearest

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neighbors as competitors in fact, if not in word, and although they have not lost a sense of neighborliness it is seldom that there is any unity of action for the economic benefit of the group. Not even the tie of language nor the common persecution of ridicule has given to the credalist the strong community spirit of the sectary groups. He is on exactly the same plane as the sectary German when he finds himself in a community with other races and interests than his own. Social consciousness is lacking and the vision of the possibilities of the whole group is not seen.

Furthermore, there is more farm tenantry among the credalists than among the Lancaster County group. The one ambition of the older farmers especially seems to be to get a tenant. There are very few of the old men that have enough love for farming to overcome the desire for village or city life. About one half the farmers in Lehigh

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County are tenants and it is an undeniable fact that among the owners debt is increasing.

The lack of social consciousness that this situation produces in countryside and village is pathetic. It is true that neighbors help one another at funerals—and indeed a funeral is quite a social event. The annual butchering also brings forth an exchange of neighborly courtesies, although pay is increasingly demanded for this help and beyond these two events there is little cooperation.

Recently a typical Pennsylvania-German community, centering about a small village, was offered a three-day winter Chautauqua by the Pennsylvania Chautauqua Association. Twenty guarantors were required. The effort failed for the lack of four names. Not a single teacher, not a member of the Board of Education would lift a finger to help in the effort. Only one farmer was

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represented among the sixteen who were willing to serve on the guaranteeing committee. Half of those who signed had lived in other communities. Practically all the rest were members of the only church in the community with a resident pastor on full time. In a similar community three years ago a furniture dealer, two millers, two small manufacturers, two farmers and a minister were discussing a most important forward step in the life of the community. Summing up the conservative and typical position one of the farmers said, "I mind my business and I want other people to mind theirs."

These tendencies show themselves in many ways but most of all they seem to have affected the country church instead of being affected by it. For the country church of the credalist type shows the same weaknesses that are found in rural churches the country over. The churches are losing both

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in membership and attendance. A survey of one community which was in many respects above the average, disclosed the fact that fifty per cent. of the people seldom entered church except for a funeral. Quite a number of these people frankly confessed that the church as such had no hold upon them, but the inborn "religiosity" of the Pennsylvania-German was not entirely gone, for some that had not attended a service nor paid dues for years declared loyalty for the denominational name. Under the circumstances it is not surprising to learn that, though the community had increased five per cent. in population in the last decade, church-membership had fallen more than ten per cent., while church attendance averaged only fifteen per cent. of the membership. This is far from being an isolated instance. The attendance at communion services has fallen off in the last decade to a marked degree.

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Of course, there are reasons for this. A century and more ago religious privileges were few in Pennsylvania and the Moravian home missionaries went hither and thither preaching once or twice at many different points. They held together these groups of worshipers as a sacred trust, refusing to admit them to their own communion and turning them over to the ministers of their respective denominations as soon as these could be brought over from Germany. The circuit system had to be maintained in order to cover the large field. Germany was slow in following up those who had left her, and it was due almost entirely to the energy of Muhlenberg and Michael Schlaetter that any provision at all was made. The circuit system which they found they were forced to continue for many reasons. To-day it is grievously abused. Services once or twice a month and no oftener are an opening wedge for Sabbath-breaking. The min-

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ister lives in the town or city with his people there and drives out to three or four rural charges. Ceasing to have pastors living among them the people grow apart from their ministers. There is more insistence on belief than on life. How could it be otherwise, when teaching the catechism becomes in fact, if not in thought, as it does in so many instances, a more important function of the church than translating the gospel into terms that apply to the modern life of a farming population, especially to its young people? The latter, growing up into a vastly different age than their fathers and grandfathers ever knew, look to the country church and find nothing, except the preaching of a dogmatic Christ and the opportunity once in a lifetime for twelve weeks of perfunctory study of the catechism. When that has been accomplished and they have made their credal confession, both the young people and their church have complied with

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custom and both continue on their way. Whatever may be the weaknesses of the sectaries in taking their pastors directly from among the people, they have certainly given religion a life emphasis, instead of a credal emphasis and to do that is the outstanding need of the credalist Pennsylvania-German to-day.

Sad indeed is the gradual breaking away from the church in many a family. There was one grandfather, known and loved the country round, who was the pillar of his church back in the pioneer days. As often as there was service he drove his big family to church in the large farm wagon with its rough bench seats. The years have passed. But two sons and one daughter, a widow, reside in the community. The others are scattered. The two sons still belong to the church of their father. They have taken his place on the church boards, they remain loyal to the traditions of the past, but they

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are not so often seen in the family pew nor at the board meetings. The complete break has come with the third generation. Regularly the many sons and daughters of these brothers come for instruction, and regularly the boys and some of their sisters break away from the church. They hate their farm life. Their pleasure is a trip to one or the other of the near-by towns for the enjoyment of degrading recreations—degrading because the Pennsylvania-German has never learned to play. Their confessed ambition is to get away from their present life and go elsewhere. Self is at the center and circumference of their view. The fathers sadly recall “the good old times” and lament the degeneracy of these present days for which the past is responsible. They do not see in the sagging roofs of a near-by church’s horse-sheds the emblem and sign of the real trouble.

This then is the people who dominated

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Coopersburg in 1912, and these are some of their characteristics. They are storekeepers, mill-hands, clerks, professional men, farmers, and retired farmers. They have all the weaknesses of the credalist type but they have also all the strength and promise of that type. The story of how weaknesses once discovered can be overcome is the story of the rest of this record.

Coopersburg had a community spirit adverse to much that younger people idealize. It had not yet felt the socializing forces that are binding together the peoples of the world. The newer ideas in regard to education, the sense of the value of the newer professions for men and women, had not as yet taken possession of the entire community—nor any community like it. Leadership seemed to be lacking. There was no vision.

One Sunday afternoon in December,

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1913, a young Christian woman of Coopersburg was surprised by her pastor in the empty Sunday-school room of the church. The children had all gone home. The girl was troubled. Touched by the spirit of service that is preached in all America to-day, this young woman longed for some opportunity to express her altruism and idealism in practical Christian effort. There seemed to be no outlet. The handicaps and restrictions of the sheltered village life shut her in. With the simplicity of tragedy she bared before her pastor the details of her routine life. Here was a Christian life, touched, uplifted, possessing faith, hope, and love, but shut off from the full expression of Christianity by insufficient education and all the other things which go to make up the environment of any unawakened village.

More than mere vocational guidance or its lack lay back of this case, for the

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terms by which we designate social ideas are too coldly impersonal when they touch the living tragedy of an imprisoned soul.

The incident made the pastor very thoughtful. The individual case might be dealt with and was. There was no guaranty that similar cases would not arise. Gradually there grew in the minds of the pastor and the mistress of the rural manse the conception of a community organization which would be able to meet the varying needs of the village as they arose, which would be able to develop and utilize leadership in awakening Coopersburg to a "sense of things not realized."

The plan was thoroughly discussed with the church boards and then with a group of twelve representative citizens in a meeting called by the church. The plan was endorsed as its details became better known to the group to which it was proposed. As

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they talked it through they began to see the possibilities of cooperative effort, the strength of their combined influence. There was born a faith in Coopersburg undreamed of before. The dynamic of it was a girl's tears. The result of it was a new community life.

III

FAITH IN COOPERSBURG

THE idea to which these dozen men pinned their faith called for a central organization to be known as a Neighborhood Association. This organization was to meet every social and religious need in the community as it arose.

To do this, the work was to be divided among committees covering the following phases of village life: Industry, Recreation, Home and School, Civic Improvement, Health and Hygiene, Religion and Morals, and Publicity.

An association so organized would not have to wait for the arousing of public opinion before acting in any given instance. The machinery for expressing the community's mind would exist within the com-

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munity itself. Through any committee the neighborhood could speak at least a preliminary word on any question that arose.

Such an association, too, precluded the necessity of ever forming separate organizations for the different forms of community endeavor that arise in growing towns. It would be difficult to find any matter of common interest to such a neighborhood as Coopersburg which could not be properly referred to one or another of the seven standing committees.

While being thus all-inclusive, the plan of organization was simple enough not to overburden a rural community such as Coopersburg is. By it Coopersburg is and will be saved the financial appeals of several organizations, for the Neighborhood Association presents only one financial appeal based upon budgets turned in by each committee to the directing body of the organization. This is composed of the chairmen of

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the committees and the usual officers of any association.

After due consideration a mass-meeting of all the men of Coopersburg was called to which the plan was to be proposed.

It was a great meeting in many ways. A city editor and a number of city social service workers were there to speak briefly and to offer suggestions. The town band was there. It met the speakers at the trolley station and escorted them to the hall offered by one of the lodges for the occasion. Into it crowded the men of Coopersburg over one hundred strong. Some were skeptical, some indifferent, some interested, some curious, and in the hearts of some fear and faith and hope held sway.

The burgess presided and the plan was unfolded. The city workers encouraged the undertaking, the band played stirring tunes. A number of citizens spoke and finally it was unanimously voted to proceed

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with the organization of the COOPERSBURG NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION.

The step was taken amid considerable enthusiasm. Strong leaders were elected to fill the various offices. There was more music and the meeting adjourned.

It was a great meeting. It was the beginning of the community's first socializing experience. For the first time the men of Coopersburg as a body had taken a step which showed their united faith in the place in which they lived. As a city editor wrote in the leading editorial in his paper the next morning: "The town is united on the proposition. When it is considered that well over half the population of the town eligible to vote were at the meeting and decided with practical unanimity to form the organization, the stability and worth of the sentiment can be realized. If we in —— were to have had a meeting like that at Coopersburg and turned out a proportionate number

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of people the crowd would have filled the biggest hall in the city and left enough over to fill with its overflow every other hall in the city. If we had such a meeting we would conclude that business was meant. In other words Coopersburg means business."

The editor was right, and the Executive Committee lost no time in getting to work. It was found that the men chosen represented all churches and lodges and all types of business interest. This happy situation was made still more noticeable when all the committee appointments were made. One sixth or more of the population over school age are serving on committees. For the first time recreational needs were treated on a par with industrial interests and considerations of community health took equal place with questions of education. As never before the leaders themselves caught a vision of the oneness, the interrelation, of all com-

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munity interests. They became united, fused together as one on a common basis and under a religious impulse. The impulse of that vision has kept them hard at work in a spirit that will overcome all obstacles.

For there have been obstacles and discouragements. One of the first acts of the Executive Committee was to open the membership of the Association to the women of the community.¹ This aroused the antagonism of some. Others opposed the entire scheme simply because it was something new. Some feared that undue influence was to be exerted on the village council. Others thought that it was planned to interfere with the work of the existing governmental machinery—such as the school, health board, and council. Again some believed that the effort was a veiled attack upon the saloon.

¹The Association admits to its membership any man, woman, or child, regardless of creed, race, or position, living within the bounds of the community.

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Some of the misunderstandings were perfectly natural and time has removed them. Others have persisted through the months. There are many reasons for this, and these reasons will arise wherever such a work is undertaken. They find their root in old-time disagreements, the desire of industrial interests to try to control the situation to the detriment of other interests, the danger of the domination of one man or small group of men, the self-complacency of partial success, even to personal jealousies. Despite these things, however, the community as a whole stands united for progress and the achievements of the two years that have passed since the organization meeting are the best attest to the fact that "Coopersburg means business."

IV

A SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS INVENTORY

IT is a curious fact, that while the average member of any rural community knows every one in it by name and could find his way to any house on a dark night without a lantern, yet he does not know his community. He may hear of a scandal, know of a fertile field, realize that church attendance is stationary—or worse; these and a hundred similar things may be his, but the knowledge of their significance, of the part they play in the community life and the light they shed on it—that is not his. He does not know his community.

Coopersburg was no exception to the rule, and hence one of the first acts of the Neighborhood Association was to have a social and religious inventory taken. The

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Rev. T. Maxwell Morrison of Bellona, New York, who made the Pennsylvania Survey for the Presbyterian Department of Church and Country Life, was secured for this purpose and with him cooperated workers of the Moravian Country Church Commission and, of course, the people of Coopersburg.

The territory included in this survey went beyond the borough limits of Coopersburg and included all the neighborhood which traded in the village stores.

A soil survey of the county had recently been made by the Department of Agriculture and all three varieties of soil found in the neighborhood were declared to be productive. The land ranges in price from \$35 to \$100 an acre. All the staple crops are grown and the soil is also suited for alfalfa. The loam soil is excellent for peaches, apples, and small fruits, and there are a number of fine orchards in the vicinity.

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The external appearance of the village itself is in keeping with the beauty of the surrounding country. The houses are set back from the shaded streets. They are surrounded by well-kept lawns and attractive gardens. Everything speaks of the tidiness of the Pennsylvania-German housewife. The sidewalks and the streets are better than those of the average borough of equal size and everything is kept in good repair. Running through the town is a small stream of pure water which at one place has been dammed into a pond. The survey discovered further uses for this little creek.

So much for externals. Coopersburg is good to look upon and this very fact accounts to some degree, perhaps, for the health record of the community. The altitude is 600 feet and the rolling land renders drainage easy. The water supply is superb, the water coming from a spring without the

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borough limits. The death-rate for the nine-year period preceding the survey was 14.8. The rate for 1914 was 11.8. The average rate is a better record than that for rural Pennsylvania and New York, but a poorer record than that for New York City in 1913—13.7. These figures brought home the warning needed in all rural communities, that fresh air and water and plenty of sunshine contribute to, but do not guarantee good health if other conditions are favorable to the growth of disease and disease carriers. The rate for the last few years, however, is encouraging so far as Coopersburg is concerned. With care it can be made one of the healthiest places in the country.

A laxness in quarantine was uncovered due to the fact that parents have not understood the really serious character of some children's diseases, and also because the lack of community spirit makes the in-

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dividual convenience in multitudes of such cases of more importance than the social need.

“If one were asked to describe the main feature of the life of Coopersburg it would probably be summed up in some such words as, ‘industrious’ and ‘tired,’” writes Mr. Morrison in his survey report. The house-to-house canvass showed less than a dozen men without some employment. Even the “retired” farmers are working a few acres of land somewhere. The hosiery mill, the tobacco factory, the farm, and the railroad claim the largest number of hands. The carriage factory, shoe factory, casket factory, bending works, and machine shop all employ their quota of from twelve or fifteen to two or three. A number go to Allentown and Bethlehem to work in the city store, mill, or office. There are, of course, the usual number of professional, commercial, and trades people, all busily occupied in

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their various pursuits and in the up-keep of their homes and gardens.

The hours of labor range from eight and nine to fourteen for the railroad watchman. The average is ten.

Coopersburg does not feel the pinch of periodic labor. The farming season over, the unemployed find work in the city factories, and the wages paid are up to the average for such communities. Despite the widespread feeling of pessimism the economic situation found by the investigators seemed ideal, except for the farmer, who suffers at times from the ills that affect American rural life everywhere. There was no complaint about wages. Three quarters of the population have bank accounts and control about that percentage of the quarter of a million dollars deposited in the local bank.

The housing situation in Coopersburg is also good. The property valuation is about



PUBLIC SCHOOL,
FIRST NATIONAL BANK BUILDING AND POST OFFICE

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\$400,000—the number of taxables 258. There are no rural slums in Coopersburg. There is not a house in the neighborhood which is not in good condition. Rents yield a fair return on the investment. More houses are needed. Many men from the neighborhood work in the community and must board there during the week to the loss of their own home life. They would bring their families into the town if possible and could they do so it would strengthen the community life in many ways.

Coopersburg has advanced beyond the little red schoolhouse stage. The public school building stands out as one of the most prominent buildings in the community and stamps the people as placing a higher estimate upon the value of education than is sometimes found among the Pennsylvania-Germans. Nine full months comprise the term, the average attendance percentage is

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94, and the salaries for both male and female teachers are higher than the average for the county or state.

The interior arrangement of the rooms and conveniences in the school are good. The only fault with the building is the bare condition of the white walls of the rooms. The rural school needs to learn the health and moral value of attractive interior decorations and to understand the influence such decorations, or their lack, will have on the future homes of the boys and girls. Defying analysis but yet ever present as an element in some children's dislike of school is the rebellion of their natures against the unbroken monotony of white walls and blackboards.

The grounds around the building are also unfinished. More shade trees need to be planted. The school stands in an ideal situation and can readily become a part of the community center that is being planned, and

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of which more will be said in a future chapter.

The recreational situation was found to be typical of that existing in thousands of rural communities to-day. There is a pathos in the significance of the matter-of-fact recital with which the various diversions are presented.

"The people reveal the desire for recreation in a number of ways. When picnics are held by the churches in adjacent groves, they are well attended, and the people enter into the sports and games with real earnestness and pleasure.

"A number of people go frequently to near-by towns to take advantage of the amusements offered for commercial gain, such as moving pictures, theaters, dances, ball games, etc.

"There are a few young men who frequent the hotels of Coopersburg to play pool at tables owned by the proprietors.

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"A small group gathers almost daily to pitch quoits.

"Another group frequents regularly a well-known rendezvous for card-playing and gambling.

"Still another group gathers and spends the evenings in drinking and exchanging low stories and smutty talk.

"A company of young men have formed a baseball team.

"About thirty boys have been organized into a Boy Scout patrol.

"A company of young women have formed a club known as 'The Eight Week Club' in which Y. W. C. A. methods are taken up for the time.

"Other companies of ladies have gathered to read, and to cultivate friendship ties.

"But there is no central moving power to encourage and direct by suggestions in any way the recreational spirit and endeavors of the community aright."

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Under the circumstances it was no wonder that here as in many other places to-day there were some that had mistaken the purpose of recreation and thus been led into temptation and vice. The churches had not been negligent in preaching against sins, but nothing had been done by Christians for insuring plenty of wholesome good times.

The social and moral conditions of Coopersburg were found to be similar to those of many rural communities. The lack of life emphasis among the credalist Pennsylvania-Germans is apt to show itself in moral laxness. There were other undeniable weaknesses, startling when viewed in their aggregate but there were also superior sources of strength.

The loyalty to the denominational name shown by the Pennsylvania-German credalist was plainly disclosed in the fact that 84 per cent. of the population over 15 years

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of age are church-members. Contrasted with this moral asset is the fact that of the forty-one signers to the liquor license applications of the three hotels two thirds were



church-members. As is apt to be the case in Pennsylvania-German communities, where a man's "keeping company" with a woman is looked upon as almost as binding as a marriage, the number of forced marriages was shown to be high. On the other hand the number of illegitimate births is



MORAVIAN CHURCH

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very low. The dreg element was not, therefore, exceptional compared with any similar rural community. It can be diagrammed as follows:

WHICH SHALL RULE? THE BIBLE OR THE BOTTLE?

2
CHURCHES

3
HOTELS



$\frac{2}{3}$ of
The Bottle was
filled at the request
of church-members



Of the 41 signers to the liquor license applications
28 were reported to be church-members.

The religious aspect of the community is a concrete illustration of the two types of Pennsylvania-Germans. There are two church buildings in the town itself and six within two miles of it. All of these churches

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are substantial and in good repair and all of them are examples of the typical rural church. In most of them the Sunday-school is held in the main auditorium of the church for want of even the right sort of a basement. They are churches trying to do a twentieth century task with the equipment of a hundred years ago.

There are four ministers residing in the borough itself. One is pastor of the Mennonite Church and combines his work with the cultivation of a farm and other interests. The German Lutheran pastor serves three rural charges beside his town church, and the Reformed minister also has three other congregations. The Moravian pastor gives his full time to his congregation.

The survey disclosed the fact that 464 people in the community professed to be church-members, half of whom were Lutherans, a little more than one quarter Reformed, and the remainder divided between

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the Moravians, Mennonite Brethren in Christ, United Evangelicals, Roman Catholics, Baptists, and Dunkards. A study of the records shows that 157 of the professing Christians of Coopersburg hold their church-membership in churches located outside of the community. In many instances

Population of Coopersburg community-751	100%
Professing Christians-464	62%
Members of Coopersburg Churches-307	40%
Average Attendance in Evening- 283	37%
Average Attendance in Morning-100	16%

these people had to pass two churches in order to get to their own and some of them even went by a church of their own denomination.

Here is a concrete illustration of one of the difficulties in the church work of America to-day. People live in a community, enjoy its religious atmosphere and its other privileges but they do not hold themselves

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responsible for sustaining the religious institutions of the community. Furthermore it is impossible to reach them through the churches for any forward steps in community work. Considerations of sentiment, family, or lower expense keep the membership in churches elsewhere, but whatever the considerations, be they more or less worthy, such a condition makes for a cheap religion. When the annual check is mailed to the church treasurer there is a comfortable feeling that the Kingdom's obligations have been met for another twelve months, that righteousness has been fulfilled, that the premium of their eternal life insurance has been paid for another year. The Church as such must paraphrase the slogan of the town stores and sound the challenge, "Worship at home churches."

Just how this situation affects church conditions in Coopersburg can be seen in the chart on page 49.



ST. JOHN'S CHURCH

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The benevolence figures of the group of churches in Coopersburg show that the credalist congregations averaged less than one dollar per year per member for home and foreign missions, while the sectaries gave about \$8 a member. The one church with a full time resident pastor was shown to raise about sixty per cent. of the money given for religious purposes. Some day rural communities and home mission boards of all denominations will be convinced of the practical value from every standpoint of an undivided resident pastorate.

Each professing Christian in Coopersburg gives on the average of \$3.48 a year for the sustaining of Christian worship in the community and \$1.01 for the spread of the kingdom of God elsewhere. The total of the two is not very much more than the price of a soda, a glass of beer, or a package of chewing gum a week! It is to be remembered that this is a record made by a people

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particularly forward in their religious professions and notably loyal to their denominational affiliations.

These figures are the more significant when compared with the educational budget. In the year of the survey \$3,709 was spent for educational purposes exclusive of the state appropriation. In the same period \$1,617 was raised for religious work of all kinds. The combined salary of the ministers resident in Coopersburg is less than the average salary for male teachers in the public school.

Recalling again the fact that one church having nine per cent. only of the professing Christians in its membership gave sixty per cent. of the amount raised for religious work in Coopersburg, and remembering that a man gives in proportion to his interest rather than in proportion to his ability, and the failure and task of the churches in Coopersburg will be seen. Then, viewing

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the problem in the large, realize that the situation in Coopersburg is distinctly better than in many other credalist communities of Pennsylvania-Germans and in many other country churches all over the land, and it will be clearly seen that rural America to-day needs urgent recalling to the power, the comfort, and the value of the gospel of Christ for the daily life.

The study of the religious statistics completed the scope of the investigation. Coopersburg had boldly said at the beginning of the inventory, "A village surveyed is a village unafraid." When the finished social photograph was presented to view some cringed. Others, including the Board of Directors of the Neighborhood Association, realizing that the very making of such a survey was a sign of promise, went to work on a program which was to use the discovered strength in overcoming the recognized weaknesses. They put the faith

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they had in Coopersburg into practise aided by the best results that were attained by the survey,—results not to be diagrammed and plotted,—the lives that were enlarged, invigorated, and put to work in Christian service in and for the community.

V

A FAITH IN PRACTISE

THE significance of whatever contribution Coopersburg is to make to the work for rural progress lies not in the facts disclosed by the social inventory. Many a rural community, surveyed and unsurveyed, can show similar conditions. The significance of the work lies in this—that an appreciation of the real situation caused the formation under religious impulses of a well-nigh ideal piece of community machinery and decided the way in which that machinery was to be used to meet the situation. It is the story of what has been done thus far that this chapter tells.

From the first the Neighborhood Association realized that the only impulse which could permanently unite the people was a

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religious one. There were those who believed in the new move simply for the economic advantage that it might bring to them and their town. Only religion could transform overreaching selfishness into that form of enlightened self-interest which sees that the individual rises and falls with the community and that the community prospers in proportion to its moral and religious health.

To meet the religious needs of the work, therefore, monthly religious mass-meetings were held, and the services of speakers well-known in rural America were secured. To a great extent these meetings have accomplished their purpose. Life decisions have been crystallized as a result of some of the words that have been spoken. Through these union services the churches have been brought closer together. There are tales in Coopersburg of bitter jealousy between the congregations. That state of affairs is over,

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and if any cherish that attitude they must do so in secret.

One tenet of Coopersburg's faith has been that there can be no completely saved community life that does not include every feature of the community's work, play, and living. To this end the Industrial Committee has been considered important.

Its first act was the formation of a Building and Loan Association; and it is significant that at this and other meetings of the committees men put away their cigars and ceased their talk while one of the town's clergymen asked the divine guidance in the work that was to be done and the divine blessing upon the homes that were to be built.

New houses were certainly needed in the town and the formation of such an association seemed one of the ways to get them. An energetic canvass was made and special efforts were directed to the young men,

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many of whom for want of a better place to invest, were wasting their wages. The canvass proved successful and the Building and Loan Association was most favorably launched on a course that has proven exceptionally prosperous. The new houses have come, too, as a result of the agitation—more in the last two years than ever before.

The Industrial Committee was no sooner organized than it began to receive offers from firms wishing to be induced to settle in the community. Such offers presented a temptation but they were one and all rejected. Coopersburg does not care to become an imitation city nor does it wish that whatever growth it attains shall be of the mushroom variety. Furthermore the sudden increase in the number of industries with its consequent increase in the town's population would have only aggravated the housing and moral conditions and brought

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problems still harder to solve than those suggested by the survey.

What was done was a careful investigation of the existing industries. One or two seemed to need assistance and the committee conceived it to be its duty to help to strengthen existing concerns rather than to aid foreign enterprises. This was done. It backed a reorganization of one small company, brought about its incorporation and it is to-day employing more men and turning out more work than ever before.

One public-spirited citizen has placed in the Association's control a score or more of acres to offer as free sites for such concerns as are locating in rural communities. This will enable the community to control to some extent the character of its future population and to furnish employment for, and thus hold a larger portion of its young people.

The survey showed the Coopersburg

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neighborhood to be small. Other towns further away seemed to be making more of an effort to cater to the more distant farmers. The Industrial Committee has, therefore, performed all the usual functions of a Board of Trade. Together with other committees it is working to make the farmer feel an interest in the village, to influence him to market his products in the town so that the community will not get its green groceries from Philadelphia but from the neighborhood. It has contributed to the community spirit by issuing a Coopersburg envelope, it is advertising the community and its products, and in every possible way is seeking to promote on farm and in town a strong, honest industrial life.

The old-time countryman never used to believe in play. What man of to-day has not heard his grandfather say: "If it's exercise you want, why don't you go chop some wood? That's all I used to play when I was

A FAITH IN PRACTISE

a boy." Through the Recreation Committee there is an increasing emphasis upon a proper recreational life in Coopersburg. The moral value of play has been recognized, but the work of the committee has been hard. It has not always been easy to find facilities for working out some of the plans, but there has been progress.

The committee has cooperated to the full with existing organizations such as the band, baseball team, and the Boy Scouts. Under its impulse a good orchestra and Glee Club have been added to the recreational resources of the town. A number of home talent entertainments have been worked up—of value to the performers and of great interest to the entire community. Young and old have taken part in these activities. It was a great sight recently to see the beloved president of the Neighborhood Association, whose head is almost white, take part in the town's first minstrel show with

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some of the community's young folks, including his own children.

A number of outside entertainments have been brought in by the committee, such as musicals, lectures, and plays, and it has also acted as a clearing-house for the various church entertainments, each one having its place in the program for the season.

At present the Ladies' Auxiliary is doing splendid work in supplying recreation. This body, organized with a view to assisting in the erection of the Neighborhood House, is divided into four sections. Each section is responsible for some money making recreational features during the three months of its sway. Some elaborate functions have been carried through by these women.

To the left of the school is a large tract of ground which has been leased as a baseball field. On the other side of the school tennis courts have been built and to the rear



VIEW FROM STATION AVENUE BRIDGE
THE LAKE

A FAITH IN PRACTISE

is the pond. It is planned some day to turn this land into a community park, one block from which the Neighborhood House will soon stand, and in this locality, therefore, the community's recreation can center, summer and winter, indoors and out.

Besides the proposed park the community has had given to it by a generous minded citizen a seven acre tract of woodland on the outskirts of the village which will be used as a picnic ground. Here the annual community picnic is held under the auspices of the Sunday-schools in a day given over to the good, old rural games, combined with supervised athletic tests. Here also family and lodge picnics can be held.

The Home and School Committee has performed all the functions of a Parents and Teachers Association. Its meetings have been helpful in creating a better sentiment between school and town. The May-day celebration arranged by this and the Recre-

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ation Committee was a real event in the town's history, not merely because of the enjoyment it brought but also because of the social value to the community and the children. Working in cooperation with the High School Alumni Association and with the Young Women's Christian Association, the committee installed electric lights in the public school, displacing the time honored oil lamps.

The first task of the Health and Hygiene Committee has been an educational one. This must be done before the larger features of the program can be attempted and it is being done consistently. Health articles are printed weekly in the town's newspaper and health literature is freely distributed, especially that dealing with rural sanitation, destroying the fly, and the prevention of tuberculosis. There have been lectures on health topics by doctors of the state staff and others. Clean Up days have been held

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each year and excellent work done in co-operation with the Boy Scouts.

The Civic Improvement Committee's big task was planning for and carrying through the survey. When the railroad station was slightly damaged by fire the committee, working in conjunction with the station agent, was enabled to secure conveniences in the repaired depot as well as the promise of a fine, new station as soon as the industrial depression had sufficiently passed away. The plans and specifications for this station have now been prepared. The committee has also declared against bill poster advertising and is working further to develop the community spirit which the very forming of the Neighborhood Association called into being. To this end contests have been carried on for a town hymn, slogan, motto, and colors. The hymn, which follows, is often sung in the school and always at community gatherings.

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MY COOPERSBURG

My Coopersburg! Of thee
Home of my childhood's glee,
Of thee I sing;
Haven of peaceful rest,
Village of all most blest,
To every parting guest
Thy praises cling.

My native Coopersburg!
Dear, fostering, homelike burg!
Thy name I love;
I love thy rolling farms,
Thy quiet rural charms;
My heart with ardor warms
For thee I love.

Dear God, we plead with thee,
Drive all adversity
Far from our town;
Long may her glory rise,
Her praises fill the skies;
Bless thou the town we prize,
Grant her renown.

The religious impulse that is back of all
this work is manifesting itself in many ways
and the service rendered in carrying out

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whatever has been done has conversely reacted for good on the religious organizations, instead of adversely as some feared. There is an increased Sunday-school enrolment and attendance and greater efficiency attends the work of the schools. Passages of the survey now and then form pertinent illustrations for the lesson, and the religious and moral applications can then be made and carried right into the current expression of every-day life. Church attendance also seems better. One most interesting effect has been in the changed topics of the high school graduates in their commencement addresses. No longer are abstract virtues made the theme of platitudinous oratory. The subjects of the last two years have largely concerned themselves with the practical social and religious problems of the rural community. The essays show an idealism and an altruism that is refreshing.

The significance of all this is not merely

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in the things that have been done. They have been done elsewhere, some here, some there. It is in the fact that *all* these things have been achieved within two years in a rural village through the cooperation of practically two thirds of its people of various denominational and social allegiances, and in one central organization working under local leadership. That is worth while, because it attests a faith in God that expresses itself in service for the home community.

VI

COOPERSBURG AND THE FUTURE

THE future—that to which we are ever looking—is being carefully planned for and considered by the Coopersburg neighbors. They are planning for the continued carrying on of the work in the village and countryside on the basic principles thus far laid down, but on ever-widening avenues of effort.

The Industrial Committee through its control over the free factory sites will secure a few more industries of the right sort as rapidly as any influx of population can be adequately housed. It will provide industries in which the young people of Coopersburg can work to economic advantage in useful occupations amid surroundings that will not impair health or morals.

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Another task on its program is to organize a local industrial fair. The industries of Coopersburg are few compared with those of any fair-sized town and the total output is not large, but the products are varied, interesting, useful, and are shipped to many countries. An exhibition of these products in the various stages of manufacture would be informing and calculated to awaken still more community spirit and healthy pride. Along with this effort will be the attempt to call public attention to the various industrial anniversaries—to the progress that the several concerns have made in the years gone by and in their prospects for the future.

It must never be forgotten in considering the industrial situation in the village that Coopersburg is distinctly rural, not only by government classification but in life and thought as well. The industries and the farms are closely linked, because the busy season of the two largest employers of labor

THE FUTURE

comes when the farm season is slack. The surplus farm help thus earns its daily bread in the factory in the winter.

This is an added reason why the Industrial Committee is charged with the task of making Coopersburg a center for the shipment of farm produce to the city and for generally catering to the needs of the farm neighbor. A rest room for farmers' wives and a free shed for their horses—something that does not now exist in the town—are planned for in connection with the Neighborhood House soon to be erected.

The recreation program is one of the most difficult to push forward. The only auditorium in the town is too small for the needs of the village and its neighborhood. Much could be done with considerably increased funds but no effort has been made to raise them because the campaign for the erection of a Neighborhood House is now under way. Until this building is finished

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the committee's task will be confined largely to sustaining the work already initiated.

Not so with the Home and School Committee. Cooperating with the Board of Education and the Alumni Association they have already shown what can be accomplished, and the cooperation will continue. The school grounds, as already noted, have the possibility of being turned into an attractive campus. The walls of the schoolrooms now brightened with the best of pictures need to be treated to a coat of soft color that will tone down the glare of the white plaster. Higher education is winning its way slowly in the countryside and the Pennsylvania-German is no exception. This sentiment is to be fostered in Coopersburg by this committee, which is also charged with encouraging the addition of one more year to the high school course. Many, however, can never reap the advantages of this work. Necessity, real or imagined, perhaps pre-

THE FUTURE

vented them from even finishing the local high school course. For them night work is to be planned, as is also manual training, domestic science, and other work of a similar character for those desiring it. The high school library is to be supplemented by traveling libraries from the state. It is also planned to help the school better to meet the needs of the farm children.

The Civic Improvement Committee found an unusually fine and attractive town with which to begin work. Its program, however, contains some big features—features which will mean much in the life of the borough—or any community. It is hoped to have an Old Home Week even more ambitious than that recently held in connection with a cluster of religious anniversaries. Coopersburg has sent out its quota of useful citizens few of whom have lost their love for the Saucon Valley.

To bring them home again, all at the same

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time to their old town, to let the neighborhood receive the inspiration of their varied contacts with the outside world, to let them see what the old home town has done in the last years, to let all, young and old, great and humble, mingle as of old in one big community family, giving voice to the common Father for his mercies, this is the aim of the committee. But before that time comes a history of the neighborhood now being written will have been published and the celebration of various significant events such as the coming of railroad and trolley, will have become a part of the community life.

In many respects the future of the Health and Hygiene Committee will be the most difficult to work out and the slowest to show definite results. With the gradual increase in the population and the steady increase in the number of homes using running water and modern conveniences there has come a

THE FUTURE

danger to the neighborhood's wells. The Health Committee has been charged with looking from an immediate, though scarcely recognized situation far into the future, with not only the guarding of the wells in view but also with the actual working out of a plan for sewage disposal. The beginning of a sewerage system already exists in the town, having been constructed more than a decade ago by private means. An innovation which this committee must also bring about is the introduction of physical culture in the schools. Two other difficult pieces of work are the creation of a sentiment for the strict enforcement of quarantine and the guarding of food and meat supplies.

The rural American, and especially the Pennsylvania-German with his old desire to be let alone, believes in personal liberty. More than that, when farms were isolated and every one believed that it was a blessing if children caught measles, whooping cough,

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scarlet fever and similar diseases early to have them over with, the word quarantine did not exist. These feelings have survived as the children of these people have moved into the closer contact of rural village life, and health application of the old proverb, "Circumstances alter cases," must be inculcated.

The same thing applies to food supply. Since time began, flies have been as much a part of farm life as chickens and live stock. City congestion turned the guns of science against the fly, but the sound thereof is heard only faintly in the rurally minded community. It has so long held the supremacy in health matters despite its methods of food production and preparation, that naturally it would be impossible to move rapidly to the fulfilment of this department's program. And yet marked progress in the thought of the people can be noted within the last two years.

THE FUTURE

The Board of Directors itself is acting as a Religious and Morals Committee, and apart from keeping up the work already done its program is all in the future and rivals that of the Health Committee in its difficulty.

Rural communities have long been cursed with rivalry between the churches, due to the crime of overchurching. This condition existed in Coopersburg in the last century but it has gradually disappeared, which is to the credit of the people. Church efforts are more unified than in times past. Union services are held frequently—often on such occasions as Thanksgiving Day, Rally Day, Mothers' Day and the like. With this as a basis it is purposed some day, when the opportunity offers for the full and free co-operation of the committee with all the churches, to campaign for increased church attendance and enlarged religious investment in money and service. There is a

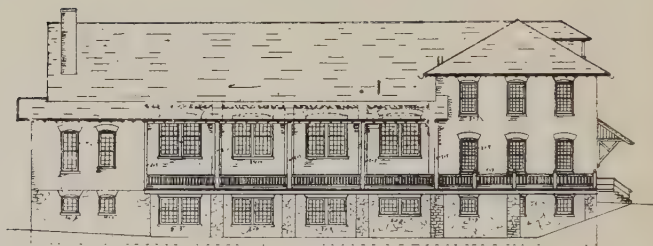
COOPERATION IN COOPERSBURG

great opportunity for a country church conference of the sixteen congregations located in the eight square miles of territory of which Coopersburg is a part. It is felt that the district Sabbath-school organization, now moribund, presents an opportunity for constructive service; one perhaps too little utilized in progressive rural work.

The Association as such is looking forward to two steps as the crown of the program—steps by means of which much of what is now planned for may be easily accomplished.

The possibilities for a community park of rare beauty and usefulness can be readily seen by even the casual observer of the high school grounds.

Mr. Morrison writes in the Survey Report, "I think I have never seen a public school ground which would lend itself more readily to scenic effects with less outlay of effort and money." To the left of the school



EXTERIOR OF PROPOSED NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE

East Elevation
Front Elevation

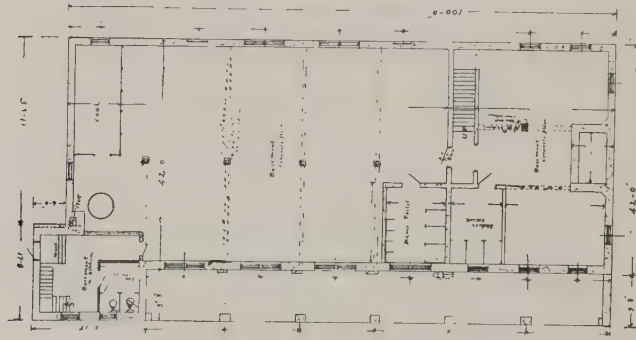
THE FUTURE

is the baseball field already leased by the Association. From it, on the left, is a view of beautiful farm lands bounded by a low range of mountains which receives a nightly kiss from the setting sun. Back of the school is a meadow with its large pond, on one shore of which is a cluster of trees. Here the boys and girls could swim and skate under proper supervision. On the right side of the school are the tennis courts, volley ball, and croquet grounds. Just one block from this proposed park lies a large plot of ground which has been donated as the site of the Neighborhood House. The plans for this building have already been drawn. Much of the money needed to build it has already been pledged in advance of the actual campaign for funds. It is expected that ground will be broken before this book leaves the press and active preparations are being made for the event that will mean so much to the community.

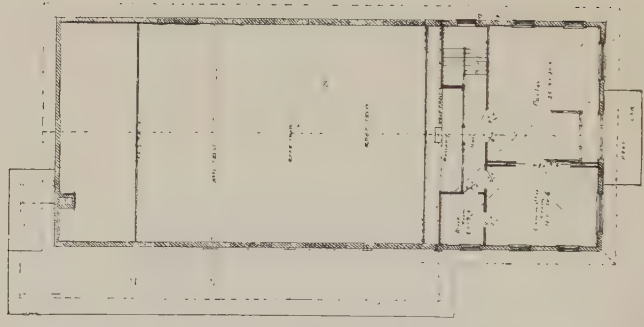
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The building will be a simple but spacious and substantial structure containing facilities for basket-ball and other winter recreations, the floor space for these to be convertible into the floor of an auditorium for lectures, plays, and similar activities. There will be a small but complete stage at one end. Committee rooms, dressing rooms, reading rooms, and a rest room for farmers' wives will be provided. In the basement there will be provision for Domestic Science and Manual Training. The building will also furnish a place for band and orchestra practise and a wing can be built for the fire company. To the rear will be free horse-sheds for the farmers. The location near the school, the baseball field, playground, and pond is well-nigh ideal.

Coopersburg is fortunate in having the local leadership to utilize such a plant. No paid secretary will be necessary although



SCALE 1/4"



FLOOR PLANS OF PROPOSED NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE

Basement

First Floor

Second Floor

THE FUTURE

some day one may have to be employed to give executive attention to the multiplying phases of the work. Some couple will at first be given quarters in the building in return for supervision. Equipment is often a weakness to the Young Men's Christian Association in the smaller communities and the Rural or County Work Department of the organization has built up a work without equipment that is one of the greatest single powers for good among the young men of rural America to-day. Communities are, therefore, apt to fight shy of such plants as are proposed by the people of Coopersburg. Coopersburg, however, feels that such equipment can only be beneficial. The school has already proven insufficient for a community social center. The proposed building, moreover, is more than a Young Men's Christian Association. It is for boys and girls, men and women, young and old. It will be used by practically every organ-

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ization in the neighborhood. There is no doubt about its ability to be self-sustaining. Bowling, moving pictures, lectures, rentals and other receipts will easily meet the cost. The Neighborhood House is the crown of the program. There is an evident need that the program be completed to the last jot and tittle. The things that have been achieved merely show with increasing clarity the need of the things still to be done. The victories thus far won give confidence in the eventual success of the entire program. The esprit de corps that is always created as an endeavor of this kind swings along makes failure ever more unlikely; triumph ever more sure. It is the condition out of which this feeling grew and the processes by which it is being attained that contribute to the message of Coopersburg to rural America.

VII

THE MESSAGE OF COOPERSBURG

THERE is a village side to the rural problem. The single economic interest of the open country is agriculture, using that term in the broadest sense of the word and including such departments as stock raising and poultry. Even in by-gone times, when shoes and clothes were made upon the farm the chief interest was still agricultural, for these things came from the products of the farm.

Just as soon as a village forms itself out of what was once farm land, just so soon other interests are introduced—few yet diversified. The single interest of former years may remain the dominant one still for a majority of the population, but it shares the ground with the others. Gradually the professional, commercial, and artisan

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classes appear. Then comes the retired farmer. The source of supply shifts. The soil no longer directly supplies the community. Many of its necessities come from the city. A new field of life, new economic interests, centers, and attractions are thus injected into the situation. New ideas are sure to come in. The dominance of the agricultural interest which can never be changed until the community becomes self-supporting on the manufacturing basis may, nevertheless, be lost sight of by the villagers. If this happens, a lack of sympathy is sure to arise between the village and the farm neighbors, to the spiritual and economic detriment of both, but even this does not alter the fact that the village is still a rural community. Its stores still sell to the farmer, its doctors still treat him, its artisans still build and repair his barns, houses, and machines, its churches still preach to him, and its people with the in-

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grained habits of generations are still rurally minded. The future of the children of all the classes in the rural town and the scope of its church work is limited to a large degree by the "simply complicated" life of the village. This is especially true of the children and it is they who feel the pull of the city to a greater degree than their parents. They can see no future for themselves in the few petty industries that the home town may have, and perhaps these industries present no stronger appeal than do the long hours behind the counter of a country store.

The child of the open country can remain in his home community with profit. He can study the science of agriculture and then take his place among those through whom the Father in heaven answers the people's prayer for daily bread. The village offers no such attractive, profitable, idealized life-work. The newer vocations

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for men and women have no place in the restricted village life. The school training seldom fits the village pupil either for going out on the farm or for taking any permanent place in the village life. One must even leave home to learn enough stenography to work the single typewriter in the office of the village's largest industry. Is it any wonder that the shining rails of interurban trolley and railroad invite the village boy and girl to go elsewhere? Who can blame the boy and girl in the average village for being dissatisfied? They are born into a socializing age, an age marked by commercialized recreation, aggressive advance in religious life and correspondingly stubborn resistance to the Kingdom's progress; an age demanding efficiency and power in all activities. They feel vaguely the surge and urge of great world movements, and with nothing to tie to in the home town, who could expect any twentieth

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century young man or woman to settle down to the type and life to be seen in the average country village?

The older generation, accustomed to the order of a passing age, products of a period of individualism, imbued with all the economic, historical, and religious conceptions of the pioneer and household farmer, fails utterly to grasp and meet the situation in the typical rural town. This accounts for the poor community spirit in most villages and for the selfishness of its churches. For generations the responsibility of these people has ended where their lane ran into the open road. For generations they have worshiped in different and often competing churches. Even economic necessity cannot quickly change village conditions. Thus the village side to the rural problem arises. The open country community can find itself and forge ahead. Its dominant interest ever remains the same and to that interest

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can be related the best idealism, the best religion of the ages. The greater challenge to-day is to bring the same gospel to the village, in terms that coincide with the village life and experience. The message of Jesus must permeate village commerce and industry, cleanse its recreation, purify its morals, better its health, uplift its schools. The rural villages of America call for a demonstration of that gospel which alone can meet their need for these things.

This program does not have to be carried out by the Church as such, but it does have to be carried out by Christians inspired by the spirit of the Master. It must be done as these Christians, seeing the vision, work together toward the goal. In his lectures before the Rural Leadership School of the Young Men's Christian Association at Silver Bay in 1914, out of the riches of his experience as Vice-Chairman of the American Commission which went

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abroad in 1913 to study rural cooperative efforts, President Kenyon L. Butterfield said this:

"The ideal rural community must be self-sufficient, so that a complete life can be lived there. In so far as any restricted part of civilization can have the resources of all civilization, it will have them. It will be an essential social cell made up of all elements. The welfare of this organization is of primary importance. The community is the beginning and end of rural social development. If we cannot build up little civilizations we cannot have a big one. A community is a neighborhood. . . . It is the getting together ability of a family of families. To build a rural community there must be a study of it. Then there must be a long term plan, a policy, but there must also be some immediate steps. From the standpoint of machinery a community council is important. There

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should be community conferences, democratic in tone. Each community should have a community engineer—probably a minister. We must incarnate ideals in a person and a building. There must be a community center. . . . Once accept the idea of community building and we re-direct all our social agencies. It also affects personal leadership. The peculiar institution of the man becomes the means to the end of community building—be it church, business, school, or lodge. This does not minimize but rather puts new dignity on these institutions and their leadership, for with every individual improvement there is also social improvement.”

In Locust Valley, Long Island, New York, Fred Eastman has been doing remarkable work in a community of twelve hundred people, combining a rich summer colony and American and foreign artisans and laborers. But the impetus for this

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work which has transformed Locust Valley in the last six years did not come from the natives of the place.

The people of Coopersburg did not know of the Locust Valley work, nor had President Butterfield given the lectures from which we have quoted, when they formed their Neighborhood Association. The demand for it sprang from among themselves. Every leader in it was Pennsylvania-German to the core and had been born and raised in the county. Is not the message of Coopersburg just this—that the ideal type of rural community organization is possible, that it can be started and led among rural people themselves, that through it the challenge of the rural village can be met and all its demands satisfied? The Coopersburg plan, substantially the same as that outlined by President Butterfield, who used a New England hill town as an illustration of the ways in which

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it might be applied to a particular situation, was conceived and initiated by a church. It sprang from a spiritual motive. It united the people of all churches and all commercial and fraternal interests on a common platform of community betterment that included all community needs so far as they could be discovered. It offered an opportunity for Christian service, for an individual working out of the best spirit of the age in terms of the best religion of the ages.

Such a work could not have been done from any other than a religious impulse fostered by the church. No other interest is broad enough and inclusive enough to see and to make others see the interdependence of every form of community life. And usually, as was the case at Coopersburg, it had to be an impulse so thoroughly religious that it could become larger than the church organization which happened to initiate it,

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larger than any church organization in the community, large enough therefore to unite all the people, regardless of other affiliations, in community service from thoroughly Christian motives—thus teaching them that the Kingdom of heaven was a bigger thing than the denomination and also that Kingdom progress helped each denominational organization.

This plan is working to-day at Coopersburg among a community of Pennsylvania-German credalists. Better than any theoretic defense it shows the strength and promise of this type of that much misunderstood people. Of course, there has been and there still is opposition. There have been discouragements and troubles, but victory is certain if the leadership remains and if new leadership is trained. The chief result of this experiment in neighborhood work has been the welding together of the community. The Pennsylvania-

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German has always been branded as the most conservative of all the conservative people that have lived upon the land; and even for a Pennsylvania-German town Coopersburg was once branded even by its own citizens as "slow," "conservative," "hidebound," "hopeless," "pessimistic," and "impossible." To-day the spirit is decidedly optimistic. The citizens are true to their motto, "Cooperate for Coopersburg." They believe in the slogan that characterizes their community as "The Town of Possibilities," and they think of those possibilities as of more than industrial import. Lives are being touched, aroused, set to work in community service from a religious motive. Religion has taken on enlarged meanings. The working out of the program in human and religious values is accomplishing a real fusing of the community into one people for the Lord. If such a thing can be done in Coopersburg

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it can be done anywhere. Coopersburg's message to those of similar communities that may chance to read these pages is this: "Go thou and do likewise." "All things are possible to him that believeth." "This is the victory even our faith."

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AUTHOR

Brunner, E. de Schweinitz

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